

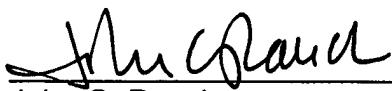
**REMARKS**

Claims 3-8 and 10-16 have been amended by this Preliminary Amendment. These amendments have been made to conform the claims of the international application to U.S. patent practice. Accordingly, upon entry of this preliminary amendment, claims 1-16 are pending in the application.

This U.S. national patent application claims the benefit of priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and 365 of international patent application number PCT/DE02/04521, filed on December 10, 2002, which was published as international publication number WO03/061011 A1, in German, and claims the benefit of priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 to the filing date of January 15, 2002 of German patent application number 102 01 303.9, filed on January 15, 2002. The specification has been amended to include at the first sentence the claim to priority required by 37 C.F.R. § 1.78.

With this preliminary amendment, the application is believed to be in condition for early action on the merits. Should the examiner deem a telephone conference to be of assistance in advancing the application to allowance, the examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney at the telephone number below.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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